(a) whether Government propose to put restrictions on Madarsas, as has been done in Pakistan; and

(b) whether Government would have financial control over Madarsas, prescribe their syllabi, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) there is no such proposal under consideration of the Government at present.

Formation of Zoo Cadre

*185. SHRIAMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Zoo Cadre, which was proposed to be formed in 1998, has not been formed so far and if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(b) by when it is likely to be informed?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The proposal has been considered but was not found feasible.

Performance appraisal of CSIR Labs

*186. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has appraised the performance of each and every laboratory under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR);

(b) if so, the conclusions of the appraising team; and

(c) what action is proposed on these conclusions?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) As per the CSIR Rules & Regulations, the performance of each laboratory/institute is to be assessed at least once in every three years by a Performance Appraisal Board (PAB), Constituted for the specific purpose. Accordingly, PABs were constituted for the assessment of the CSIR laboratories. All the PABs have met and appraised the performance. Proceedings of the PAB meetings held in respect of

each of the labs/institutes have been finalised. The analysis of the proceedings to arrive at the final conclusions is in process so that the overall strategy for CSIR could be worked out.

Modernisation of NMDC

†*187. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) is depended upon foreign technology and equipments for its survival;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if not, Jhe steps Government are contemplating to take for its modernisation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRIJ KISHORETRIPATHY): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) NMDC is a premier organisation with its own R&D laboratory and has developed a high level of expertise of world standard in areas like open cast mining, mineral exploration and engineering services. It supplements its expertise with imported technology and equipment only when required.

Area under foodgrain cultivation

*188. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the total area under cultivation in the country is coming down, resulting in a sharp decline in agricultural production; and

(b) if so, the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken to solve this problem, by encouraging the farmers to bring more area for cultivation under foodgrain, by providing them incentives under various programmes?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The net area shown under agriculture has remained almost constant at around 142 million hectares during the last few years. The Agricultural production in the country shows a long-term upward trend, albeit with fluctuations.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.